



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

behind, are delightfully designed and executed.

The stone, which is sixty-one inches high and thirty-eight inches wide, is said to come from Hwayin in Shensi near the border of Honan. Hwayin is a pilgrim resort from which the ascent of the sacred mountain Hwa-shan is made. S. C. B. R.

IMPERIAL CHINESE SEALS

OFFICIAL seals played a great part in Chinese history; they were the emblems and the means of power. A statesman who lost the seal entrusted to him by the emperor lost not only his power but ran a great risk of losing his head as well. The importance of the signature in the western world was like that of the seal in China, the seal alone made a document valuable and was in consequence valued and admired as the emperor's autograph.

To us it seems strange, to say the least, that often precious old paintings should be covered with very conspicuous red seals large and small, sometimes plastered in the middle of compositions where they spoil the effect; imperial owners would put their large square seals right on the picture, or sometimes on an adjoining sheet, and later owners, admirers, and connoisseurs followed suit. From the Chinese point of view, this added to the value of the picture, because the august or learned owners and admirers had certified to their admiration. It stands to reason that where the impression of the seal was valuable the seal itself was much more so, quasi sacred when it was the seal of the Son of Heaven, the mighty emperor.

The story will be remembered of the French collector who after the sad events of the Boxer troubles in Peking acquired a couple of large jade seals. When a Chinese prince visited his Museum, he recognized the Imperial seals stolen from the palace and offered to buy them back; the collector, however, refused to sell pieces which had entered his museum, but courteously sent the seals the next day as a present to the Empress Dowager. The Imperial lady showed herself a match to French courtesy and sent in return a

couple of the best pictures from the palace collection.

But the Chinese Empire has come to an end and the former Imperial family has lived to see difficult times; many treasures have found their way into the Peking Palace Museum but some have come into the dealers' hands. A large collection of rare Sung Chun yao bowls out of which the palace dogs, the now fashionable Pekinese, used to drink, are now awaiting bids from western millionaires and may before long serve the same purpose here. The Imperial jade seals which emperors used to touch with a finger while two palace eunuchs placed the heavy stones on the approved document, were offered as paperweights to the lovers of eastern curios.

Considering the great historical value of these emblems of great power in the past, the Museum has saved these relics from being dispersed and given them a permanent home where they are accessible to the student and to the admiration of lovers of art and beauty.

There are thirty jade seals now exhibited in Room E 8; some are very large and clumsy, some small and cunningly carved. Twenty-eight have been lately acquired; two, the seals of the late Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi, were given to the Museum by Charles M. Schott, Jr., in 1917. Alongside of the jade seals are shown impressions, some in very archaic, others in the usual seal characters, decorative but hard to decipher. Most of the seals date from the Sung period, four from the uncertain beginnings of the Yüan Dynasty when rather than risk names an ornament was used, four others are from the Ming reigns, and those of the Empress Dowager are of course of the later Ch'ing period.

The seals were used for different purposes. The palace was like a large government office and a private museum; halls for the preservation of manuscripts, paintings, calligraphy, etc., were like so many museums, other halls for the reception of poets, statesmen, generals, etc., were like audience chambers or modern government offices, and each department had its own seal which was used before documents passed into other halls.

Of special interest to us are naturally the seals used to certify the Imperial ownership or approval of paintings and manuscripts, some of which will be found in this collection.

not always easy to distinguish the difference in style between Sung, Yüan, and Ming pieces of sculpture, which are less well known than the T'ang and earlier



REVERSE OF VOTIVE TABLET
CHINESE, WEI PERIOD

From a purely artistic point of view, the heavy blocks of jade are beautiful because of the delightful tones of the rich material and the curious workmanship of the fantastic lions which surmount them. It is

specimens better represented in our museums. In this respect these seals, many of which can be accurately dated by the inscriptions, will prove of advantage to the student.
S. C. B. R.